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SONNETS

OF

LOVE AND LIFE

WRITTEN

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AND

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PROTEAN LOVE.

HANGE fills the veins of Love; all forms he wears,
And life for him is one unceasing round
Of transmigrations, into the profound
Death-guarded kingdom, where at length he bares
His shrouded face forever. Now he glares
From passion's haggard eyes, to-morrow chills
The blood he heated, like a mist distills,
Life-filling, or is vanished unawares.

Life cannot bind him, no, nor changeless death;

Between the fingers that would grasp he slips

Like desert sands. He comes as the wind blows.

Though he be gone at passing of a breath,

Happy the life before whose door his lips

Part, with the secrets that alone he knows.

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THE COMING.

SILKEN rustle on the tufted stair,
A pause, a gentle footstep's muffled fall,
Waking its elfin echoes in the hall,
A waft of violets, and I am ware
Of her within the door, her russet hair
Framing a billowy nimbus, like a haze
About her face. She seems, standing at gaze,
A newly bodied spirit of the air.

Through the light music of her talk, a strain

Of subtle melody runs, like the theme

For a sweet song whose rythmics yet unsung

Sleep in her heart. Weave, weave, oh, unwrought skein,

Into the chorded music of love's dream,

And let those unborn harmonies find tongue.

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THE FACE MIRRORED.

Thick veil from off the mirror of the lake,
And saw her perfect self therein awake
Out of the liquid darkness,—dimly seen
At first, and quivering to life between
The parted lilies—till a zephyr bent
To kiss the fair reflection, and so sent
O'er it the wavering ripple's cryptic screen.

So was it that you stooped and straightway saw
Yourself in the dark mirror of my heart
Enshrined among its shadows, all unfit
To wreathe your image. If some sudden flaw
Breathe on the glass, turn not away, nor start
To steal the trembling gladness out of it.

STREET, WALLS SHIP

LIFE'S MEASURE.

HE sky above is fathomless as Fate,
Cloudless as youth, and dark as hopeless age,
With star-dust glimmering on its mystic page.
Half up the hills the lingering shadows wait
With skyward stretching arms. The sun is late,
But flings a parting show'r of red and gold.
The river's pulse is still, save where the fold
Of foamless water and the boat's prow mate.

Let the day die unheeded darkly down
Into its dusky hill-bound sepulchre.
One word of yours and morning is astir,
One touch of yours and a new world is sown,
And all the compass of a life is spanned
In the brief measure of your clasped hand.

SHOWER PLANS

THE SHROUDED HEART.

CANNOT win her, for our ways divide,
And we are far apart who once were near.
Through misty eyes I saw her go; hers clear,
Untroubled as a summer sky, denied
A mirror for my thoughts; the waterside
On cloudy days outstretches deep and blank,
And doubles not the fern upon its bank.
So calm her face; and the drear world so wide.

Let be; hid somewhere in the dreaming cloud

That wreathes Love's altar, though but smouldering

Amid the chilly ash, some embers burn

Whose touch can wake her dead heart from its shroud,

And, like the turning of the magic ring,

Back to my side her wandering footsteps turn

THE RESERVE AND ADDRESS.

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THE DAY'S WRAITH.

NTO the shadow of the mountain's crest

The daylight flutters like a wounded bird:
The larches stretch their prayerful arms unstirred,
The water-lily sleeps upon the breast
That suckles it. Day's brawling voices rest.
I hear your heart beat softly where I lie,
The thought that makes us one. These throbs that die
With golden legacies leave us more blest.

The ghost of this sweet hour glimmering pale
Between the braided branches beckons me
To follow its dim flight to shadow-land;
I may not now, but mem'ry shall not fail
Hereafter when the beaming face I see
And run to clasp again its welcoming hand.

DESIGNATION OF THE PARTY NAMED IN

NOONTIDE SHADOW.

HE dusty road outstretches bare and white

Down to the shore; the palpitating air

With fevered pulse is quivering in the glare,

And August's fiery kiln is all alight.

Through the hot air unloosed in random flight

A hundred winged arrows swiftly slant,

Languish the breathless trees; the grasses pant

Like travellers in dusty vesture dight.

This is enough; hid from the heat and flare
That burns along the road, let me abide
Here in the quiet shadows of our love.
In speechful silence let me watch the glare
Sift through thy rosy finger-tips that hide
My eyes from all save thine that bend above.

THE PARK IN PROPERTY.

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LIFE'S GUERDON.

O him who knows the weariness of strife,

The hundred disappointments, small and great,

That mould each day and night into a life

Of fiercest struggle, though it seem a fête,—

To him who faces fearlessly defeat

Of cherished plans and hopes, Love bears a balm

And waits his coming home to greet

With consolation of divinest calm.

Fate binds Life's irksome hauberk on at day,

And flings the fickle dice that turn the fray;

Love—gentle lady—waits at eventide

To loose the clasp of battered helm and greave,

To sweeten conquest, or defeat relieve,

And bid her Knight share honor at her side.

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THE ALPINE GLOW.

FEW brief moments come ere day has fled,
The purple shadows in the valleys grow
Deeper and duskier, and on the snow
That crowns the soaring peaks day's lingering tread
Is bound awhile in manacles of red.

In vain the sun doth as a guerdon throw

To coming night the ruddy Alpine glow;

One flickering flush and the spent day is dead.

Sometimes the dearest faces that we know,
Fading from sight forever, leave behind
A golden radiance, like the Alpine glow
That fills with mem'ries bright the darkened mind,
Till the eternal twilight of time nears
And shrouds all mem'ries 'neath the veil of years,

THE REAL PROPERTY.

THE UNTRELLISED VINE.

VER the casement droops a tender vine,
Rudely untrellised from the storm-worn wall,
And helplessly its slender fingers fall,
Reaching at random where the sunbeams twine
Their golden meshes, drawn in shining line
Across the floor. A languorous perfume
Floats in the still air of the silent room,
Sweet as the scent when myrrh and fire combine.

If on the unhewn wall of life there grow
Some fair, frail vine whose clinging fingers send
Their search between the crannied stones and lend
A blooming loveliness, a fragrance sweet,
Remorseless years have laid it at my feet
And wailed their mockery. 'Twas fated so.

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THE VACANT HOUSE,

HE has gone out and shut the echoing door
Behind her going; dark and windowless
She leaves my little house; the chance caress
Of a stray sunbeam falls along the floor
Where she was wont to stand, but stays no more.
The guests she summoned, each with some fair gift,
Are vanished with her; only shadows drift
Disconsolate where fell a song before.

The subtle fragrance of spilled wine afloat,
Wedded to silence when the banqueters
Are gone, fantastic music's dying thrill
Sighing its lesson when the hands that smote
It into life are ceased, a mist that blurs
The present—only these life's chambers fill.

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VEILED WOODLANDS.

HE pines' sweet balsams on the crisp air float

Hither and yon. All silently the few
Gray clouds that linger yet in heaven's blue
Drift through the azure like the phantom boat
Of childhood's dreams. No more the swelling note
Of joyous song-birds fills dull Nature's ear;
Winter with chilly fingers now is near,
To dress the forest in its sear brown coat.

Through mem'ry's woodlands Love's dim garments trail,
And from their silken folds faint perfumes sweet
As piney balsam or the spice of Crete
Steal o'er me. Ah! they cannot make
Love's shadow real, her voice awake,
When Time o'er life draws Winter's sombre veil.

THE RESERVE AND ADDRESS.

THE FORGOTTEN.

E drifted back to the familiar town,

Bent with the weight of days, with snowy hair
Bleached by the storms of many a weary year,
Storm-tossed and sad, with tropic sunshine brown,
Came back to find the old place older grown,
Strange children playing in the village street,
Only a stare from them he chanced to greet,
And cobwebs on the doors his youth had known.

Only the silent sleepers on the hill

Know the poor wand'rer turning from the deep;

Over their graves the Summer breezes sigh

In mournful melody a welcome still.

For soon at best he'll sleep the dreamless sleep,

And side by side with childhood's mem'ries lie.

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LOVE AND LIFE

OVE lingered on the earth's remotest verge
And imped his weary pinions to explore
The void expanse that chafes Time's yielding shore—
The pathless way whither all ways converge.
Against his face he felt the flying surge
Of darkness tangible. His weak wings tossed
Like the sea spray in the darkness lost,
And startled Silence woke to moan his dirge.

And Life despairing stood with outstretched hands
Watching Love's fading pinions fan the dusk
As one who lingers while the western skies
Bind up the day's last sheaves with golden bands,
And wonders whether evening's withered husk
Into to-morrow's morning shall arise

THE OWN STOLL







